

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CARACA 06525 151730Z

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4707

S E C R E T CARACAS 6525

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ENRG, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AIDE MEMOIRE RE US-VENEZUELAN ECONOMIC
RELATIONSHIPS

REF: CARACAS 6500

1. RE SECTION I, PARA 1 REFTL, I WAS RECEIVED BY FONMIN SCHACHT THIS MORNING AT 9 O'CLOCK. HE GAVE ME A THREE-PAGE AIDE MEMOIRE IN RESPONSE TO OURS OF JULY 9 (CARACAS 6263, STATE 145991), OF WHICH AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION WILL BE FORWARDED BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM. DESPITE FAIRLY STRONG LANGUAGE IN FINAL PARAGRAPH, TO WHICH I TOOK EXCEPTION, SCHACHT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE EFFUSIVE IN INSISTING ON VENEZUELA'S DESIRE FOR INCREASINGLY CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID HE HOPED THIS HAD BEEN MANIFEST IN MY BREAKFAST CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ AND I SAID INDEED IT HAD. I ADDED THAT I WAS PARTICULARLY HAPPY TO HAVE THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL ASSURANCES THAT, ALTHOUGH VENEZUELA IN ITS OWN BEST INTEREST MIGHT BE BETTER OFF BY CUTTING PETROLEUM PRODUCTION IN HALF, THE PRESIDENT HAD INSISTED THAT PRODUCTION SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AT PRESENT LEVELS AND LARGELY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNITED STATES. I SAID I THOUGHT THESE ASSURANCES FROM THE PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA WOULD RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME IN WASHINGTON.

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SECRET

PAGE 02 CARACA 06525 151730Z

2. I TOLD FONMIN THAT MY OVERALL IMPRESSION FROM SATURDAY'S BREAKFAST CONVERSATION WAS THAT, ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT YET MADE UP HIS MIND AS TO DETAILS OF FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR OIL COMPANIES, THERE WAS STILL ROOM FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AS "PARTNERS" BECAUSE OF THE BASIC MUTUALITY OF INTEREST BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND THE UNITED STATES. I SAID I GATHERED FROM MY TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS ROOM FOR OUR COMPANIES IN TERMS OF TECHNICAL ADVICE, MANAGEMENT, AND MARKETING. WITH THIS SCHACHT AGREED, SAYING, "WE CANNOT DO WITHOUT YOU".

3. IN CONCLUDING OUR BRIEF BUT CORDIAL CONVERSATION, I SAID MY OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS JUSTIFIED "MODERATE OPTIMISM." THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE WOULD GO FURTHER. HE SAID, "I AM VERY OPTIMISTIC."
MCCLINTOCK

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